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AUTHOR Anderl, Robert G.
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ABSTRACT

Why does an academic research library, emphasizing bioscience topics, decide to alter access to periodical literature relevant to that subject? This paper discusses how and why a change was made, resulting in access to articles via compact disc (CD-ROM) and not current hard copy issues received on subscription. Issue use and cost are primary determinants, but the impact of the role of the research collection as an interlibrary loan lender is also addressed. Although the University of Alaska at Fairbanks is not large, its library does support doctoral research. Space and cost considerations made library planners question the need for many subscriptions. The library's success with another CD-ROM product influenced the decision to use ADONIS. To fulfill its role as lender in the area, the university has cataloged all the ADONIS titles on its bibliographic utility and holdings database and has assumed responsibility for satisfying loan requirements for all these titles. Experiences with the first 9 months of ADONIS use have justified the planners' expectations. (Author/SLD)

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ED 364 251

ADONIS IN AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH LIBRARY

Presented to:

ADONIS North American User & Publisher Meeting

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Presented by:

Robert G. Anderl
Head, Information Access Services Department
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-6800

ABSTRACT

Why does an academic research library, emphasizing bioscience topics, decide to alter access to periodical literature relevant to that subject? This paper discusses how and why a change was made resulting with access to articles via CD-ROM and not current hard copy issues received on subscription. Issue use and cost are primary determinents but the impact of the role of the research collection as an ILL lender is also addressed.

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In February 1992, these words were offered at a conference entitled "Collection Assessment and Acquisitions Budgets." The speakers, Daniel T. Richards and Antonija Prelec regarding collection assessment said, "We can also gather information for cooperative collection development by identifying titles that, though important to the library's user group, may be of sufficiently low use that the need for the title can be satisfied through ILL or through a commercial document delivery mechanism." (1. p.35)

Then the speakers proceeded to tell about a recent survey which they conducted to gather information about the practices of collection assessment in health sciences libraries. The report of that conference session identifies a total of 14 reasons for collection assessment (1. p.34) Their conclusions, as I understood them are that many collection assessments are motivated by the need for libraries to save money, and, that saving can be accomplished by cutting current subscriptions. "Unfortunately the principal motivating factor -subscription cost- too frequently takes precedence over the need for the item..." (1. p.36)

Had my library been part of this survey you can bet that we would have identified budget or money as a motivating factor. Because at the time the survey results were reported, early 1992, a new campus administration at the University of Alaska Fairbanks was calling for a complete program review. Information from the program

review would fuel a strategic planning process necessary to respond to a projected financial shortfall for the institution. This program review process included the libraries, the main library and a BioSciences branch library. The information from the library's internal review process indicated that subscription cuts were necessary and an assessment was in order.

The survey, as reported, concentrated on large medical collections serving medical schools. UAF is neither large nor does it serve a medical school. Nonetheless, the 14 reasons for collection assessment may be just as relevant. To put our setting in perspective, the average survey collection contains 2,200 subscriptions with a subscription budget of $600,000. The UAF BioSciences library is about one-third that size, yet it does support Ph.D. level research, emphasizing the bio part of any biomedical definition. The other libraries on campus are the main library and a separately funded Geophysical Institute Library.

Another of the 14 reasons for collection assessment is the need to identify materials for storage. UAF could relate to that need also as some preliminary work had already been started in 1990 at the main library and in 1991 at the BioSciences library.

Despite the financial motivations identified, cost of a subscription was not the most frequently cited response to the survey question as to why a title might be cancelled.

The number one reason for cancellation was low use. Surprise? No, because other articles had recently indicated that low use is an important factor. (2 & 3) This includes libraries on the other side of the Atlantic reported as recently as in the July issue of the Bulletin of the Medical Library Association. (4) And, of course, the issue of "ownership vs. access" or "just in time vs. just in case" is found throughout current literature.

Let's refer once again to the last four words of the quotation which opened these remarks. Then let me try to relate that sentiment to the UAF experience as well as include the topic which has brought us to the first ADONIS North American User & Publisher Meeting.

Does ADONIS fit the definition of a commercial document delivery mechanism? Our BioSciences Librarian would agree with that definition, especially since he has become a regular user of the service. My purpose here is to back up a little in time and look at the activities which led to the decision to acquire ADONIS at UAF.

A serious shortage of shelving space was prompting a look into the use of titles within the collections. To this end a census of periodical use had begun with the fall semester of 1990 in the main library. This census included the counting of every item after use. The counts were categorized into four subtotals: 1)current issue, 2)retrospective issue, 3)bound backset and 4)microform backset. This census continued for a year and accumulated a

lot of data to be analyzed. In the fall of 1991 the census was replaced by a sampling technique. However, all reshelving was counted, it just wasn't categorized or identified by specific title or call number. The sample was large, approximately 40% of the total count, and continued the same categories as the preceding year. Result? A lot more data to be analyzed.

In the fall of 1991, the BioSciences library began a similar project because they too had a storage problem. Also, hints of a program review were beginning to be heard on campus. The method of collecting data at BioSci was different in that the use quantities were based on title and disregarded the age of the issue(s) used. We measured how many times and how many volumes/issues of a title were reshelved, but we did not differentiate as to whether or not the use was the current issue, the current year or even more dated.

By the spring of 1992 the program review process and plans for the library suggested a target for curtailing subscriptions by more than a quarter of a million dollars. However, the plan also encouraged the transfer of hard copy current issue subscriptions to other formats or methods of access. One player, or option, in this equation could be ADONIS.

Another option to outright cancellation under consideration was the use of other services such as CARL or FaxonFinder for current issue, with microformat

subscriptions entering the collection at a later date. This option, if to our financial advantage, also benefits the need for space.

We were already committed to another CD-ROM product, Business Periodical Ondisc by the summer of 1992. That experience was, and remains positive, thus encouraging a serious investigation into other "commercial document delivery mechanism" based on in-house CD-ROM content.

The questions posed to ourselves during the evaluation process were not so much the capabilities of such a mechanism, but, whether or not the titles involved were used, to what extent were they used, and where were they housed. In addition, would such an acquisition contribute to the financial benchmarks which had been identified for the library?

The continuing use studies would help answer the first set of questions. This meant that all the accumulated data had to be analyzed. And as luck would have it, another activity in the library, a cost analysis of subscriptions, would also contribute to the decision making process.

During the spring/summer 1992 the library surveyed the faculty to gather opinions of the importance of individual subscriptions. In late August we began the process of making some very serious decisions on the cancellation or retention of titles. The purchase of ADONIS was virtually the first decision concluded. Here's an overview of the data which led to such a decision.

For the financial year just concluded, 1991/92, the cost of periodical commitments for the library system was $507,591. For that investment the library received 2,345 titles, 1,826 in the main library and 519 at BioSciences. ADONIS duplicating subscriptions at that time were 90, 22 at the main library and 68 at BioSciences. The respective costs of those subscriptions were $27,239 and $54,040. Table I gives more details regarding the ADONIS titles.

Financial savings became obvious as portrayed on the graphic. But, would the replacement of the titles by a CD-ROM product be tolerated? Use data might shed some light there. Because the ADONIS duplicating titles were split between the libraries, use data needed to be carefully analyzed. Also some PR with the user was going to be required because the product could not be divided between the two locations and we certainly weren't going to buy two copies.

The quantities for subscription renewal cost and issue use for the ADONIS titles was less in the main collection, consequently the decision was to acquire the hardware and place the station in the BioSciences library. That seems obvious and other campuses might find that a walk between two libraries may be no problem. However, at UAF, while the libraries may only be a half mile apart, that walk might need to be taken in sub-zero temperatures, in the dark. But, the financial need was so great and the savings were so

significant that the decision was made to acquire ADONIS even with these problems.

Table I indicates the use, or non-use of the ADONIS titles. While we have had access to ADONIS for only 9 months, I do believe I can say at this time that the decision was the right one to make and if circumstances were to repeat, we would make the same decision.

Other factors may influence major decisions such as this one. I call this a major decision because the money to purchase the hardware for this and other products came by extending subscription cuts beyond the targeted quarter million. However, these factors are often less direct or tangible than measured use or annual cost to the budget. Recalling the sentiments of the quote which opened these remarks, the authors suggested that sometimes local clientel might be satisfied via ILL. As the major collection in the region, doesn't UAF have responsibilities as an ILL lender as well as being a borrower when necessary?

What happens when a research library acquires something like an ADONIS, as did UAF, and greatly expands the quantity of titles in the collection? What might be done to share the wealth - the opposite of ILL borrowing - fulfilling the role of a lender? In fulfilling this role for our region, UAF has cataloged all the ADONIS titles, approximately 4 times the number of titles cancelled, on its bibliographic utility and holding database, WLN. Today, we assume

responsibility for satisfying ILL for all the titles, not just those which might have changed format.

The first 6 months of use statistics, at least that use which resulted in a copy of an article, indicate that several other libraries have immediately called upon us to help them. The evidence is having 42 articles copied; 10 from titles cancelled at BioSciences, and 32 from new titles, leaving zero for the main library portion of titles cancelled. These proportions will probably change in the future, but of the 42 requests for copies, 34 were received via ILL representing 80% of the total. These numbers fade in proportion to the potential quantities within the entire database. As an example, the number of articles supplied on the first 31 disks for 1993 had 19,808 articles from the cancelled subscription titles.

Cataloging and/or changing holdings statements of the utility for approximately 400 titles itself is no simple task. I would like to take a moment here to suggest that more coordination might be possible for others who acquire the product. For instance, if UAF made known to WLN that the particular holdings were ADONIS related, then that system should be able to keep track of total holdings so that when another library tells WLN that it too has ADONIS, the specific titles are already known. This could be a benefit to all CD products as it could have been a benefit in the past to those libraries which acquired microformat research collections.

In other words, if a bibliographic record were identified within a research collection which might be acquired commercially as a set, the library making the purchase would be automatically and immediately identified with each bibliographic record without need for specifying the unique entries in the utility. This is a benefit to the potential borrower more than to the holder.

This is not unheard of or unique. WLN is already doing something like this on a more intricate scale with GPO publications. So I would like to encourage owners and users, such as we who are gathered here today, to communicate this to our utilities and request some action be taken along the lines of identification of commercial collection as it relates to the identification of individual bibliographic records.

I somehow feel that this would encourage libraries to cooperatively acquire these products rather than always depend on ILL as the substitute for cancellation of a subscription. After all, the price of the product has already been demonstrated to save cost, not increase it. However, the hidden costs must also be considered, and cataloging 400 titles and holdings can be a hidden cost to be recognized or it can become an ignored activity.

ADONIS is a commercial venture, such as suggested by Richards and Prelec. The commercialism lies in the satisfaction of copyright payment after the fact of use, not in advance or in speculation as might be inferred from a

subscription payment. Encouraging others to benefit from the use of the system can be price structured in such a way that the vendor/publisher is satisfied, the user is satisfied and the service via the local or regional library has been efficient and cost effective. This access will be enhanced as greater indexing to the articles become available at the touch on one's keyboard in the convenience of their office or home.

Of course by that time, access to the article will probably be accomplished via telecommunication connections and fax (or equivalent) to and from a central database, and the role of the CD-ROM will be eliminated. The user will insert an account number to pay a reasonable charge in order to make this all happen. And those of us who agonize over the decisions to retain this subscription vs. that subscription will be able to turn our attention to other pursuits.

In closing, let me add two other pieces of information which support the actions taken at UAF. First, one more word on subscription use and cost. I have been able to do some analysis of the entire set of commitments for serials/periodicals at UAF and have devised a simple formula or technique for isolating titles based on use and cost. The isolated titles are the extremes of a numeric tally which ranges from zero to 81. The low value end of the list recommends continuance. The high value end of the list are those titles which should be the first examined for

cancellation, or substitution obtained from a commercial document delivery mechanism.

This use/cost technique has been submitted for publication and I don't have time to go into details here and now, but let me leave you with this hint. The simple technique provides a numeric collection midpoint at the value of 20. Individual titles or subsets of the collection may be related to this midpoint benchmark. In our UAF experience, for the main library portion of ADONIS, the average was 31, well above the collection average, consequently these titles should be looked at first because use is low and price is high compared to other titles in that collection. In comparison, other subsets have been calculated at values ranging from a low of 3.4 for the "N" segment of the LC class system, 6.4 for the APs, and 43.2 for the QAs. You might see how UAF was able to arrive very quickly with the decision that ADONIS was a good thing for the libraries.

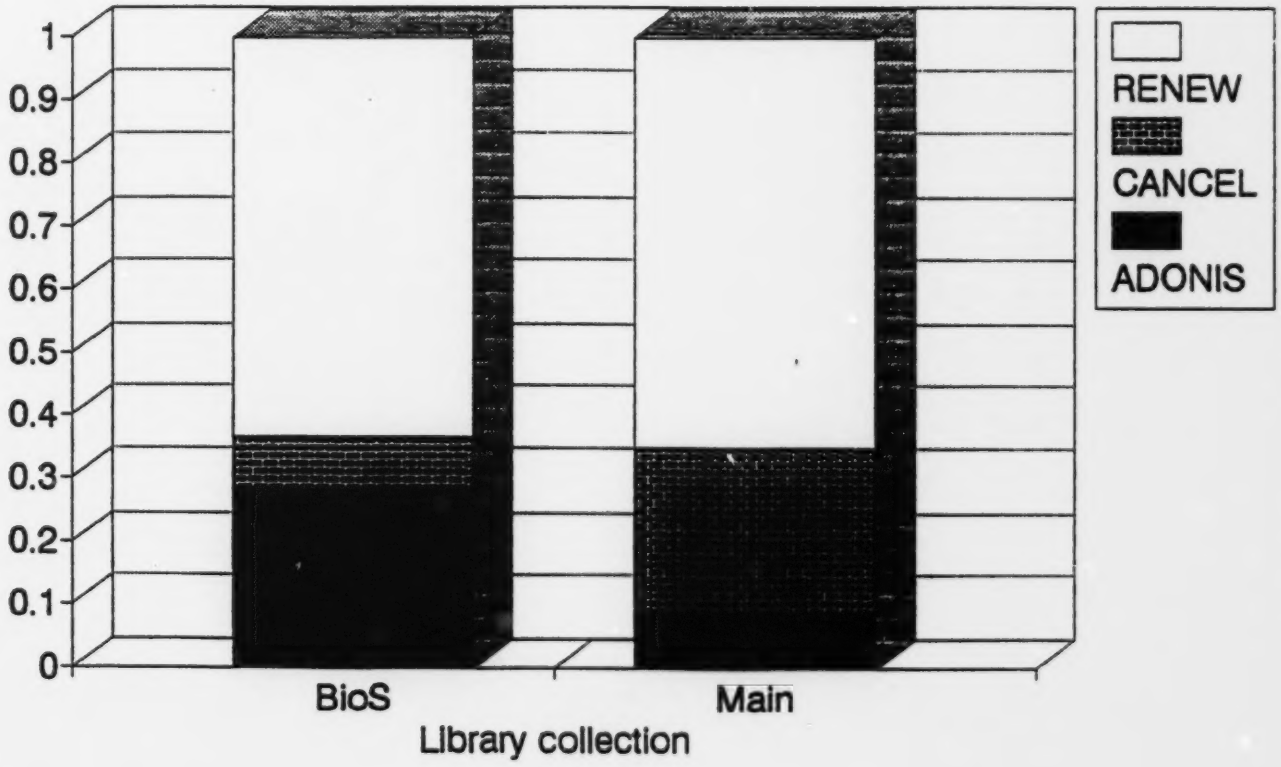
The other positive factor is the investment our library is making in networked access to electronic information, within the libraries, on campus and throughout the state. We call the network ElmerNet, and we look forward to the day when the index portion of ADONIS may be accessed for the advantage of any user regardless of where they may be located. When we can do that, our very optimistic plans for ADONIS will be closer to realization.

TABLE I

Data category	Main Library			BioScience Library		
	ADONIS	CANCEL	RENEW	ADONIS	CANCEL	RENEW
Number of titles renewed			1435			358
Number of titles cancelled after 1992		369			93	
Number of titles cancelled but duplicated on ADONIS	22			68		
Number of issues checked-in (titles times frequency)	376	2518	11749	642	480	3381
Cost to renew in 91/92 for subscription year 1992	$27,239	$83,829	$206,185	$54,040	$15,824	$120,474
Cost to renew in 92/93 for subscription year 1993			$240,787			$140,958
Cost of ADONIS in 92/93 for subscription year 1993						$13,892
Current issue use during 90/91 - census	64	159	5095			
Current issue use during 91/92 - census	34	294	6110			
Current issue use during fall 92 - census	6	150	2461			
Current year use during 90/91 - census	232	652	12672			
Current year use during 90/91 - percentage	1.7%	4.8%	93.5%			
Current year use during 91/92 - sample	45	213	3988			
Current year use during 91/92 - percentage	1.1%	5.0%	93.9%			
BioScience use - title use (2 year total, 1991/93)				756	226	6029

Renewal cost distribution for 1993

Percent of total



And with that, unless there are some questions, I will close my remarks.

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